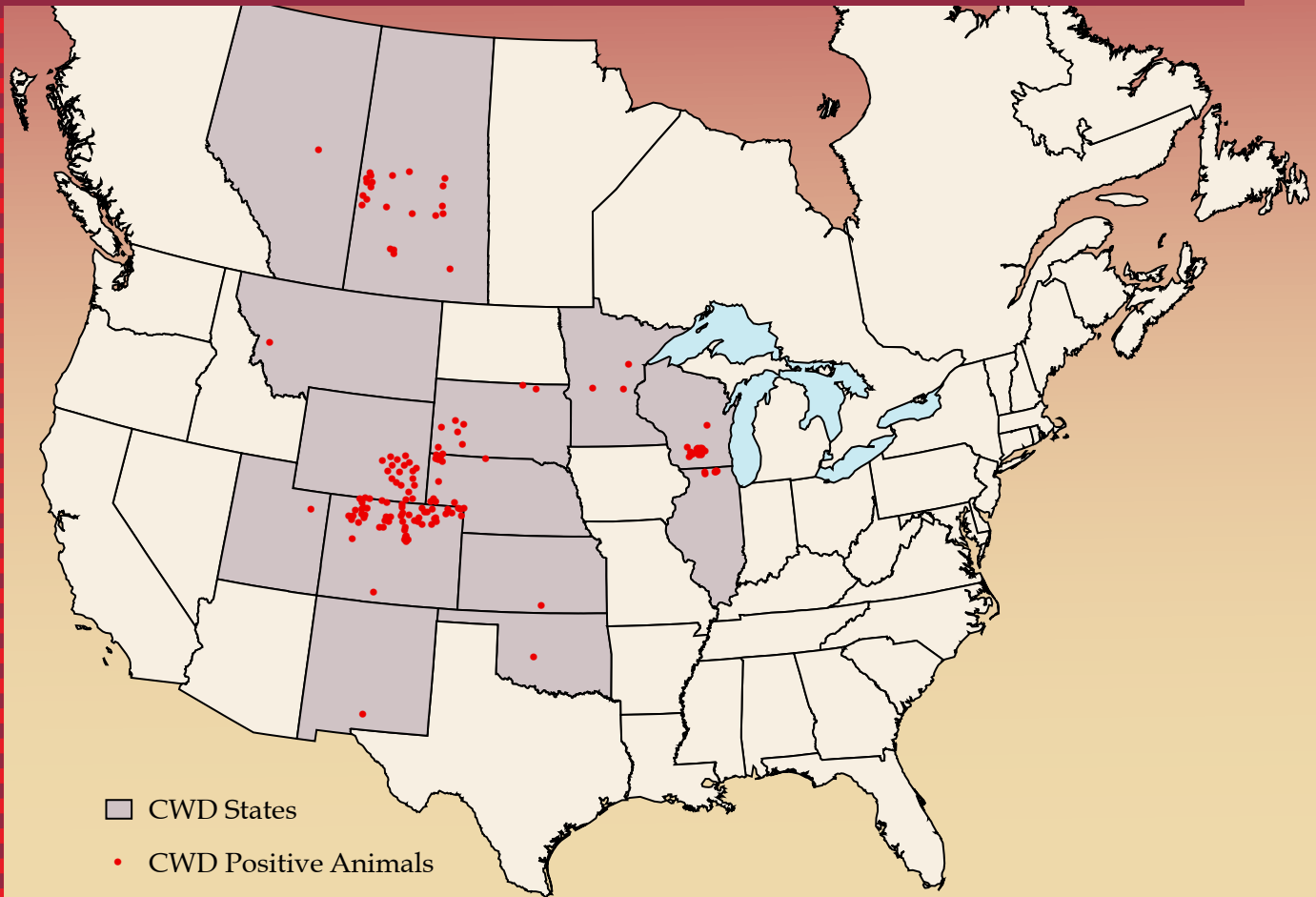


Chronic Wasting Disease



What we know about Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

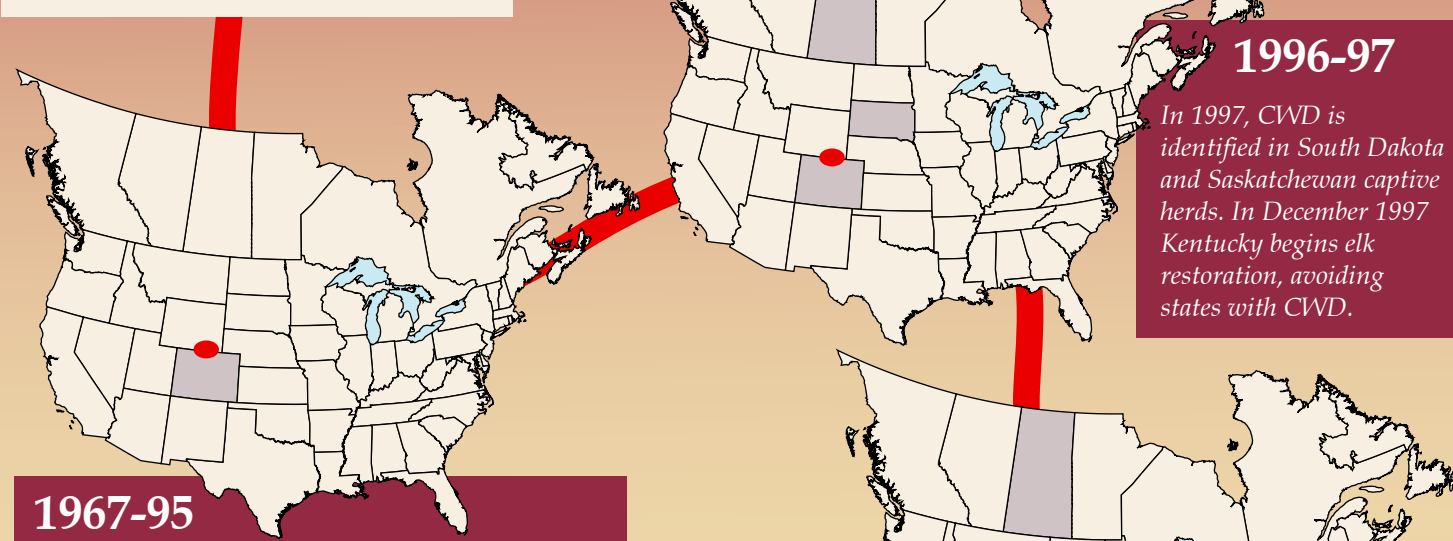


- ◆ ☐ Fatal brain disease of deer and elk caused ☐
☐ by abnormal proteins.
- ◆ Causes progressive weight loss and ☐ ☐
☐ "wasting".
- ◆ ☐ Similar to "mad cow" in **cattle**, and scrapie ☐
☐ in **sheep**.
- ◆ ☐ Spread between animals and contaminated ☐
☐ soil.
- ◆ ☐ 5-year incubation period.
- ◆ ☐ **No live animal test. No vaccine.**
- ◆ ☐ Spread primarily by movement of captive ☐
☐ animals.
- ◆ ☐ Not yet known to be transmissible to ☐ ☐
☐ humans or livestock.

Spread of CWD in North America

1967 - present

- State or Province w/ CWD in Captive Animal Populations
- CWD Infected Wild Populations



1967-95

CWD is known to occur in a captive facility and the surrounding wild deer and elk in Colorado and south-central Wyoming and is confined to this endemic area for 30 years.



How could CWD impact Kentucky?

Hunter numbers could decline in the short term due to fear of CWD. Native deer herds would increase far above current levels, causing crop damage, nuisance deer, and deer-vehicle collisions. While CWD is not currently known to affect cattle or humans, consumers could be hesitant to accept livestock products from CWD infected areas. The Canadian government has prohibited some infected Saskatchewan farms from producing **any** agricultural products including grain and livestock. **Captive elk owners are suing the Canadian government for encouraging them to farm elk.** There are 40 CWD infected captive elk herds in Saskatchewan, 38 of these herds became infected from a single Colorado deer farm. Saskatchewan cleanup costs are estimated at more than **\$19 million**. Wisconsin CWD cleanup costs total over **\$12 million** for fewer than 50 cases of CWD.

1996-97

In 1997, CWD is identified in South Dakota and Saskatchewan captive herds. In December 1997 Kentucky begins elk restoration, avoiding states with CWD.

1998

Movement of cervids from CWD positive areas by ranchers continues. Captive herds in Nebraska & Oklahoma test positive.

1999-2000

Montana is added to the list of positive captive herd states and Nebraska finds 1st case of CWD in wild deer.

2001

In 2001, wild deer in South Dakota and Saskatchewan test positive for CWD.

2002-03

By 2003, wild herds in Wisconsin, New Mexico, Utah & Illinois test positive. CWD in captive herds spread to Alberta and Minnesota. In 2002, Kentucky discontinues importation of elk for restoration purposes.



Can humans or livestock be infected with CWD?

There is no scientific evidence that CWD has or can spread to humans, either through contact with infected animals or by eating the meat of infected animals. The Center for Disease Control has stated: "The risk of infection with the CWD agent among hunters is extremely small, if it exists at all". However, as we are still learning about this disease, the KDFWR recommends that hunters take precautions to limit risks. There also is no indication that the disease can spread to species other than deer or elk. Research continues.

Economic impacts

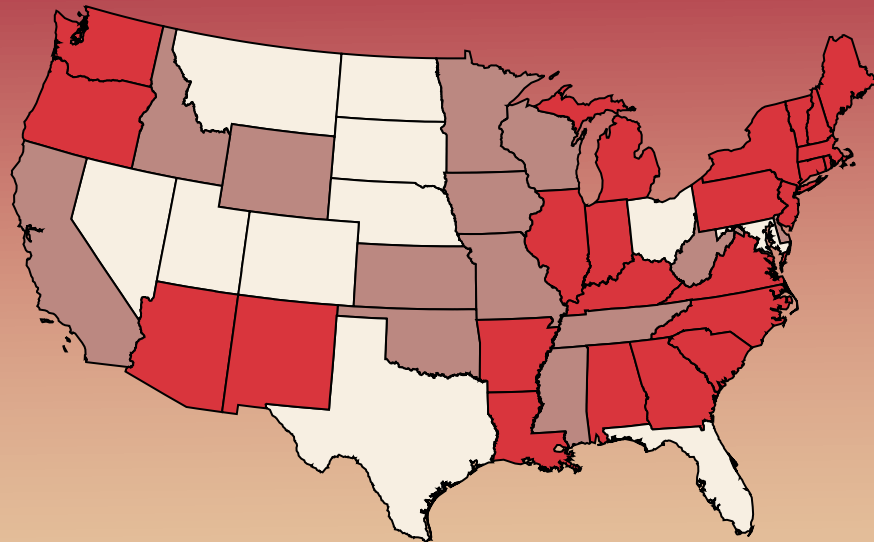
The risk of CWD has caused concern among hunters nationwide. CWD caused a 10% decline in hunting license sales in Wisconsin last year. With **271,000** deer hunters supporting 3,500 jobs and an annual economic impact of **\$409 million¹** in Kentucky, a similar decline in license sales would be devastating to rural Kentucky. Hunters may be hesitant to harvest and consume deer that might be infected with CWD.

1. Southwick and Associates, Fish and Wildlife Economics



Cervid Importation Restrictions

- ☒ Total ban
- ☒ CWD state or area ban
- ☐ Restricted importation



CWD Prevention

Chronic wasting disease has not been found in Kentucky. All deer and elk tested since 1997 have proven negative. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is testing more than 2,400 hunter-harvested deer and elk from the 2002-03 season. Hunters should feel comfortable hunting deer and elk, but should follow common sense precautions such as not eating animals that look or act sick.

- ☒ ☐ We must continue surveillance of wild and captive deer and elk
- ☒ ☐ A complete importation ban of cervids is needed for now
- ☒ ☐ KDFWR must remain the lead regulatory agency over cervids
- ☐ ☐ ☒ At present there is no vaccine/no live animal test

The Bottom Line



- ☒ ☐ Deer and elk are important wildlife ☐ ☐ resources
- ☒ ☐ CWD is a disease that could affect ☐ ☐ wildlife with important social and ☐ ☐ economic impacts to Kentucky
- ☒ ☐ Captive deer/elk are high risk ☐ ☐ for CWD due to high density ☐ ☐ confinement.
- ☒ ☐ Regulation of deer/elk importation ☐ ☐ should remain with the Kentucky ☐ ☐ Department of Fish and Wildlife ☐ ☐ Resources
- ☒ ☐ The KDFWR will remain vigilant to ☐ ☐ protect all deer and elk in Kentucky.



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☐ The Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources is funded through the sale of hunting and fishing licenses. It receives no general fund tax dollars.
☐ If you feel that you have been discriminated against by this department, please contact: Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources, #1 Game Farm Rd., Frankfort, KY 40601; phone (502) 564-3400.

